

SHIPS



STAFF PHOTO/CHRIS BERNSTEIN

After being rowed out to meet the Rose, John McCaig of Duxbury acts as pilot to guide the ship into Duxbury Bay.

Sailing is a hands-on experience for guests

By Lesley Mahoney
STAFF WRITER

Those in search of a leisurely day of sailing and sun need not apply. The tall ship HMS Rose is not the place.

A day on the sail training vessel, the nation's largest active wooden tall ship is a day on your toes and a chance to be a part of what makes the majestic ship go.

The Rose, said its skipper Richard Bailey, is not a passenger ship.

"A passenger is someone who asks, 'Where do I sit?'" he said.

That hands-on element is largely what makes accompanying the Rose from one port to another truly an opportunity of a lifetime.

About two dozen people had exactly that chance last Friday aboard the 179-foot long and 32-foot wide square-rigged vessel as it made its way from the Sandwich Marina into Duxbury Harbor, where it docked until early Monday morning for three days of festivities which raised funds for and marked

the opening of the new Duxbury Bay Maritime School.

At 11 a.m., about two hours after the Rose — a 28-year-old replica of the Royal Navy frigate — had set sail, the crew divided its guests into a port and starboard watch.

"We're going to set the halyard on the starboard," called out boatswain Jesse Schaffer. "Ready on the halyard?"

"Ready on the halyard," a crew member called.

"Haul away," Schaffer said.

For those on board for the sail into Duxbury, working under the direction of the crew for a day was a mere slice of the experience of trainees and crew members.

Nevertheless, the six or so hours aboard the Rose, whose home port is in Bridgeport, Conn., made an impression its guests will never forget.

Larry Weston, a cranberry grower

5/21/1998

SHIPS

- 2 -

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from Buzzards Bay, saw the Rose in its Sandwich port the night before it was set to depart for Duxbury as he was pumping for frost on his bogs.

"How often do you get to do something like this?" he said he thought to himself the night before he was set to board the vessel for its journey.

"I think it's great especially because I've never been on a ship like this... It's complicated. It takes a team of people to know what they're doing," said David O'Connell, owner of the Winsor House Inn, which catered the weekend's events.

"Every time you change course, you have to deal with all the ropes... There's always something happening," said his daughter, 13-year-old Abby O'Connell, who is used to sailing with her father in his 36-foot sailboat.

For 10-year-old Chris Armanetti of Carver, the trip was an "awesome" one.

"I got to help steer the ship. That was just about the best thing I got to do today," he said.

The fourth-grader secured a spot on the Rose with his colored pencil rendering of the ship — the winning entry of a contest hosted by Marshfield's WATD-FM.

Chris said he has been drawing ships since he was 4 years old. "They looked like shipwrecks then. Now, they look awesome," he said of his drawings.

"I'm just fascinated with ships. I think it takes a lot to build them and I understand how much work it is for crews to sail them," said Chris, who takes sailing lessons.

Along with a number of passengers, Duxbury's Watson and Juliette Reid climbed up past the vessel's gun deck.

"Like the astronauts said, 'Man, what a view,'" said Watson Reid of the band Dr. Watson Reid & Americana after his climb. "This is just one of those things that you don't get many chances in life to do."

"I wish more people had this opportunity," said Duxbury Town Manager Rocco Longo, who sailed on board the Rose with his wife Colleen. "I feel like when I get off, we'll have a Ph.D. in sailing. If I retain half of it, that will be good."

Schaffer said that when Rose trainees leave the ship, they "really are junior members of the crew." He said while Friday's guests were only on the ship for a day, they accomplished a lot.

"This country, this world, have an incredible maritime tradition that's being lost because there are not many ships like this being built. Part of what we're doing is keeping that maritime tradition alive," he said.

For Schaffer, who gave up a career in politics in New York City for sailing, said his own sail training experience was what got him hooked.

"My bedroom accommodations might not be so great but my daytime ones are awesome," Schaffer said. Standing on deck, he said, "You're in my living room. The sunrises and sunsets here are pretty special."

The day's passengers, in turn, were afforded a glimpse into that world.

"It's spectacular. It really gives you the appreciation for what it's like to sail in a vessel like this," said

David Murphy of Norwell, a vice president for Ocean Spray, a corporate sponsor of the Rose event.

While he preferred to stay on deck, his wife Robbie Murphy climbed up the ship's mast for the final leg of the trip.

Joy Arrowsmith, an Ocean Spray cranberry grower/owner from Pembroke joined her and literally got a bird's eye view of the Rose's journey into the harbor.

As she approached Duxbury's channel with her sails furled, the Rose was joined by crowds of boats and fanfare. Harbormaster Donald Beers helped guide the vessel into the channel from one of the department patrol boats.

Hundreds of people lined the shores of Shipyard Beach as well as the Town Pier to greet the Rose.

While he cherished the experience on the Rose, David O'Connell said he "almost wanted to get off the boat so I could see it coming in."

The Rose docked with its bow pointing towards the Duxbury Bay Maritime School flag hanging from the Snug Harbor headquarters, dwarfing all of Mattakeesett Court.

From the quarterdeck, Bailey said maneuvering the Rose into the channel was easier than he had expected.

"It was a good day, there was a light air, and the wind was ideal for what we were doing," he said.

And according to Bailey, who has captained the Rose full-time since 1985, the destination was key.

"Small towns are ideal for ships. Ships get lost in big cities," he said.

The cause is also something Bailey backs.

"I think (the maritime school) is a great project. I think the school will do great," he said.